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THE IRANIAN GODS OF HEALING

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THE OBJECT OF THIS ARTICLE is an inquiry into the personalities, connections, and origins of the two chief Iranian gods of healing. Airyaman and Thritha are among the most mysterious and most ancient figures of the Iranian pantheon, as were their Indian equivalents, Aryaman and Trita. Fresh light upon those deities cannot fail, therefore, to elucidate various questions concerning the mythology of the Aryans in general, and especially concerning the origins of the gods of healing.

I

Airyaman (Pahl. Irmān) is represented in the Avesta as the healer *par excellence*. In Vd. 22. 7 ff. it is said that Ahura Mazda sent his messenger Nairyosaiha into the brilliant palace of Airyaman (*airyamnō nmānəm*) to tell him that he would bestow upon him abundant blessings and provide him with 'spells, beneficent, desirable, holy, filling up what is empty, overflowing what is full, helping whosoever is weak, and restoring health to the sick.'

His conventional epithet is *išya*, 'desirable.' He has no mythical characteristics in the Avesta, and the same may be said of Aryaman in the Veda, where his name is very frequently mentioned, but seldom with any features of his own. He is closely associated with Varuṇa and Mitra. He partakes of the beneficent activity of Mitra. In RV. 1. 51. 9 he is invoked for rain: 'By thee, O Agni, Varuṇa, who protects law, and Mitra and Aryaman, the gods who pour water in abundance, are the winners.' He is, therefore, connected with water and fertility, as appears also from RV. 5. 3. 2, where Agni is addressed with the words: 'Thou art Aryaman when (the wooer) of maidens' (Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 45). He is a kind, beneficent deity, essentially helpful to man both in India and in Iran. The name itself means 'the friend, the companion.' In the Gāthās

(32. 1, 33. 4, 49. 7) it is used as a common noun for the members of the fellowship of priests (*sodalis*).

Aryaman as the good companion of Mitra and Varuṇa is, therefore, the third member of the great triad of the Ādityas, the moral deities of India. The two first members do not vary, but the third one is either Indra, as on the very ancient inscription of Boghaz-Keui—Mitra-Varuṇa-Indra-Nāsatya—or the goddess Anāhita, as in the Old Persian triad of Auramazda-Mithra-Anahita (Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 78).

Indra is the god of storm and fertility (cf. especially Hopkins, *JAOS* 36. 242 ff.). Anāhita is the goddess of the heavenly waters, presiding over the production of life, securing fecundation, etc. (Yt. 5. 2, 6). It seems, therefore, that though the gods vary, the conception remains the same: the third member of the triad is a deity of heavenly waters and fertility.

Moulton (*op. cit.* pp. 78, 239) has shown the influence upon the Persian triad of the Babylonian parallel of Sin, Shamash, and Ishtar, in which the Semitic gods have the same moral attributes (god of supreme commands, god of justice, and goddess of fertility) as in the Iranian combination. While there is little doubt about the reality of such a contamination, I have endeavored in *AJTh* 21. 58-78 to collect evidence tending to show that a similar influence is likely to have been exerted at an earlier period by the other Babylonian triad, Sin-Shamash-Ramman, upon the triad Varuṇa-Mitra-Indra, or Varuṇa-Mitra-Aryaman.

Ramman or Adād is the Babylonian equivalent of Indra. He is the bellowing (*Ramman*) god of storm and the Marduk of rain (Jeremias, *Alt. Testam.* p. 41). With rain, he bestows abundance (Jastrow, *Babylonian Religion*, p. 237) and all kinds of blessings. Like Aryaman, he is the helper *par excellence* and the faithful companion of Shamash who, like Mitra, is a god of justice associated with the light of the sun.

In conclusion, though it is impossible to obtain any certainty in the case of Aryaman, it may be said that the various indications which we possess about his character coincide in presenting him as a god of rain and of fertility who is essentially helpful to man. It is only reasonable to regard his functions of healer in Iran as a secondary but very natural development out of these elements. We are not yet informed about his abode (*nmāna*); but the study of the next character will throw light on this point.

II

The other great physician-god of Iran is Thrīta: 'Thrīta, O Spitama Zarathushtra, among the beneficent, strong, clever, powerful ancestors was the first to divert disease, death, lances, and fevers from man's body' (Vd. 20. 2).

In Ys. 10. 10 the same Thrīta is mentioned as one of the great primeval priests—the third—who offered the sacrifice of haoma (= soma); and as a reward for his pious act, he became the father of a hero, Kərəsāspa, a great slayer of fiends.

The second priest, Āthwya, had been similarly favored with the birth of a no less conspicuous hero, Thraētaona, the well-known conqueror of Azhi Dahāka, the dragon.

Thraētaona is better known under his Persian name of Farīdūn. In the Shāhnāmāh he rids the world of Dahhāk, the anthromorphized dragon, changed into an Arabic usurper and tyrant. Now, Thraētaona is also a healer; and as early as the Avesta, his fravaši is invoked against 'itching, hot fever, bad humors, cold fever, and the other evils created by the serpent' (Yt. 13. 131), words which reveal a certain connection between his healing activity and his power over the fiends; while in Vd. 20. 2 he is represented as 'keeping back death, disease, flying arrows(?), and burning fever from man's body,' very much in the same way as he releases the world from dragons.

In later times, Farīdūn (= Thraētaona) becomes the great healer who gives their power to spells and amulets: 'May the sick man by the strength of Farīdūn, son of Āthwyan, and by the power of the northern stars obtain health, (J. J. Modi, *Charms for the Diseases of the Eye*, Bombay, 1894).

If we turn to India, we find there the three Iranian personalities concentrated in one god, Trita Āptya (= Thrīta Āthwya). Traitana, the probable equivalent of Thraētaona, is just named in the Veda (RV. 1. 158. 5), while his functions are completely absorbed into Trita's activities.

Thrīta, like Trita, is an old, wise, and very beneficent deity, a deliverer, a repeller of all the foes that threaten man's existence. He is a bestower of long life (TS. 1. 8. 10. 2). Though he is not explicitly represented as a curer of diseases, his connection with the plant of life, the soma, makes him a powerful healer. While Thrīta offered the haoma-sacrifice in

primeval times, Trita is the great preparer of soma (RV. 2. 11. 20, and the whole ninth book). It is Trita's maidens who urge the tawny drop with stones for Indra to drink (RV. 9. 32. 2), and Macdonell (*op. cit.* p. 67) interprets Trita's maidens in this passage as meaning 'the fingers.' This is, it is true, a possible metaphor of the Vedic mystics, but these maidens are likely to have been originally identical with those released in Iran by Thraētaona—Saṅhavak and Arənavak, the two daughters (or sisters) of Yima, given to him by the water-goddess Arədvī Sūra (Yt. 5. 34).¹ This aqueous adventure of Thraētaona has a parallel in the Vedas, where Trita's characteristic action is the release of the cows on high (i. e. the waters) detained by Vṛtra, the cloud-demon (RV. 10. 8. 8), or by Viśvarūpa (RV. 10. 9. 8), the tricephalous monster, in the same manner as the two maidens were captured by Azhi Dahāka, the cloud-dragon in the Iranian form of the rain-myth.

The victory over the fiend, it is true, is in the Vedic hymns more often ascribed to Indra, yet Trita appears in the conflict as a helper who strengthens Indra by bringing to him the soma which it is his function to press and to pour (RV. 2. 11. 20, and other texts in Macdonell, *op. cit.* p. 67).

The connection of Trita with waters, which is shown in these various activities, also appears in the ability displayed by Trita in piercing the strongholds of heaven (i. e. the clouds) in which water is detained (RV. 1. 52. 4, 5. 86. 1), another form of the rain-myth. During the storm, 'when the mighty Maruts go forth and the lightnings flash, Trita thunders and the waters roar' (RV. 5. 54. 2).

The action of Trita upon the soma is also to make it flow: soma occupies the secret place near the two pressing stones of Trita (RV. 9. 102. 2). It is besought to bring wealth in a stream on the ridges of Trita (RV. 9. 102. 3; Macdonell, *op. cit.* p. 68); and when soma pours the mead, it calls up the name of Trita (RV. 9. 36. 20). But Trita is related to water in another way. In RV. 1. 105. 17 Trita is described as buried in a well (*kūpa*),

¹ In Shāhnāmah 1. 162, the two daughters of Jamshīd (= Yima), released by Farīdūn (= Thraētaona), have to go through a bath, a particular which, no doubt, shows traces of the old aqueous myth in a thoroughly epic period.

while in RV. 10. 8. 1 he is in a pit (*vavra*). These stories seem to perpetuate the old tradition of the dwelling of Trita in a remote, hidden (RV. 9. 102. 2), watery abode, into which ill deeds and evil dreams are sent in the same way as we wish many unpleasant things to go to hell (RV. 8. 47. 13).

There is, therefore, no reason to give up the traditional interpretation of the epithet *āptya* as 'watery,' though the suffix is somewhat surprising.²

Beyond his aquatic attributes, Trita shows connections only with the wind. In a hymn to Agni the winds are said to have found Trita instructing him to help them (RV. 10. 115. 4). The flames of Agni rise when Trita in the sky blows upon him like a smelter and sharpens him as in a smelting furnace (RV. 5. 9. 5; Macdonell, *op. cit.* p. 67).

Trita, eagerly (like wind?) seeking the fire, found it on the head of the cow, says RV. 10. 46. 3, a very curious expression which I suspect to allude to an old Indo-Iranian myth preserved in Bundahiš 17. 4: 'In the reign of Takmōrup (= Takhma Urupi, one of the primeval heroes), when men continually passed, on the back of the ox Sarsaok, . . . one night amid the sea, the wind rushed upon the fire-place . . . such as was provided in three places on the back of the ox . . . and all those three fires, like three breathing souls, continually shot up in the place and position of the fire on the back of the ox, so that it becomes quite light, and the men pass again through the sea' (West's translation, *SBE* 5. 62-63). It would be vain in our state of knowledge to try to give a detailed interpretation of the story. It will be sufficient to note that the wind is the agent, and that the scene is in the sea.

This connection of the Indian Trita with the wind is probably due to his having absorbed Traitana's personality, since in the Avesta it is Thraētaona who acts as a wind-god. He notably blows far away the skilful waterman Paurva, 'the old man.' He was taken away in the form of a hawk and sent to a remote place. Only through the intervention of the water-goddess Arədvī Sūra could he return to his home (Yt. 5. 61). Another

² Sāyaṇa (on RV. 8. 47. 15) interprets it as 'son of waters,' and regards Trita as an equivalent of Apām napāt. As to the connection between those two personalities, Yt. 5. 72, though obscure, is suggestive.

time Thraētaona seized in the air the glory of Yima while it was flying in the form of the bird Vārəgan (Yt. 19. 36). He is said to have been born in the far-off, atmospheric land of 'Varəna with four ears,' meaning possibly the sky with its four cardinal points (Vd. 1. 17; on the identification of Av. *varəna*, Skr. *varuna*, with Gr. οὐρανός cf. Solmsen, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 291 ff.).

The treatment inflicted upon the old waterman in the story of Paurva recalls the plight of Trita, the aged sage thrown into a remote pit by his companions (Sāyaṇa on RV. 1. 105), Ekata and Dvita, both born like him from the waters (Macdonell, *op. cit.* p. 68). This again points to a close connection between Thraētaona and Thrita, as the names already sufficiently suggest; and the remote abode is shown by this also to be an Indo-Iranian conception.

Collecting the various traits scattered in the Indian and Iranian traditions, one can with fair probability restore the myth as follows: There is an old water-god who is a wise man (Thrita in Iran receives the epithet *paradhāta*, i. e. 'ancient legislator,' while in India it is said that wisdom is centered in Trita as the nave in the wheel [RV. 8. 41. 6]). He knows many things, notably spells. In his remote abode, a well, he presses the plant of life and sends the beneficent streams of soma upon earth. He is also active in releasing the waters on high, although in the celestial realm he appears rather as the adviser and helper of another god. The regular releaser of the cows (waters) in India is Indra. In Iran, it is, however, often Thraētaona (= Skr. Traitana). This slayer of dragons appears as the juvenile, sturdy companion of Trita and shows marked connections with the wind moving the clouds, bringing the storms, and urging the fire. He returns to the same watery abode as Trita; and perhaps the *nmāna* of Airyaman, the other god of healing and of rain, was originally identical with that secret abode of the wise water-god.

III

It is in the mythology of the Teutons that we find the closest parallel to the story of Trita. In general, water is conceived by Teutons as having healing power and wisdom (Herrmann, *Nord. Mythol.* p. 132). Often enough that wisdom was embodied

in a little old waterman or a sea-dwarf, who was supposed to be rather good-natured and was expected to be helpful and to send good winds if an offering was thrown into the water (ib. p. 134). The murmur of springs, brooks, waves, etc., was supposed to be the laughter of the water-dwarf, and the idea of the laughing or prattling water is curiously well preserved, e. g., in the names of such Belgian brooks as *Jemappes*, *Jemeppe*, *Genappe* (= *gaman-apa*), or *Gaesbeek* ('prattling brook'). But besides the water-dwarf there were also water-giants. One of them is called Aegi ('aqueous,' which is almost an equivalent of *Āptya*), and with his wife, Ran, he lives in a golden palace under the sea or under the earth (Herrmann, *op. cit.* pp. 162 ff.), a circumstance which reminds us of Aryaman's abode. But the wisest water-god is Mimi (i. e. 'the thinker'; cf. Du. *mijmeren*, 'to reflect'), the spirit of the waters below. His wisdom is as deep as is his mysterious element. Mimi is an incarnation of skill, craft, and wisdom at the same time (Chantepeie de la Saussaye, *Teutonic Mythol.*, tr. Voss, p. 232). He is the inspirer and adviser of Wōdan, the wind-god, an association similar to that of Thrita with Thraētaona. Wōdan has given him his eye as a pawn to obtain wisdom. Mimi's wisdom derives from his connection both with water and with wind. Wind is constantly blowing through the boughs of the great world-tree, the tree of life and wisdom, the so-called Yggdrasil's ash, or Mimadheir ('Mimi's tree'). This feature is common to Scandinavians and Finns, since the *Kalēvala* knows of a water-dwarf, later changed into a giant, who with an axe felled Wäinämöinen's world-tree, containing all the secrets of magic and happiness (S. Reinach, *Rev. celt.* 18. 250).

Now, Mimi lives in a well at the root of the world-tree. With his water he constantly keeps the marvellous vegetation in freshness and vigor (Herrmann, *op. cit.* p. 313), a feature which curiously resembles the relation of Trita to the plant of life and his presence in a well (Skr. *kūpa*, *vavra*). Like Trita, Mimi is at times ill-treated, and even his head was cut off by the Wanen (ib. pp. 313 ff.). But Wōdan, being unable to dispense with Mimi's wisdom, embalmed the head, and, using it as a drinking horn, could through its inspiration invent the runes. To the Scandinavian, 'Mimi's head' means 'spring' or 'source of wisdom' (ib. p. 314).

According to another myth, it is Mimi who drinks mead in a horn, which reminds us of Trita preparing the mead as the soma for the gods who drink it in a horn (= the moon).

IV

The conceptions of the Greeks in connection with the water-gods reproduce many features found in the mythology of both Teutons and Indo-Iranians.

In parallelism to Midgardh and the Midgardh-serpent, which surrounds it, there is the myth of 'Οκεανός, flowing around the earth. He is an old man, living with his consort, Tethys, on the ridge of the earth. The daughter of 'Οκεανός, Σπύξ, represents the waters of the nether world and is, therefore, also the source of unfathomed wisdom by which the gods avouch their most solemn assertions.

But the wisdom of waters is more properly embodied in the figure of the old man of the waters, 'Αλιος γέρων (Steuding, *Griech. Myth.* p. 56). Like Aegi and Trita, he lives in a remote abode, a cave somewhere in the depths of the sea. He possesses fathomless wisdom, but whoever wishes to know his secrets must first conquer him in battle (cf. the treatment of Mimi).

The 'Αλιος γέρων has assumed various forms in Greece. He is conceived as Νηρεός, the old prophet of the sea, father of the Nereids, or he is Γλαυκός, the fisherman who, while walking on the sea-shore, saw some fish eating an herb that gave them new vigor. Having eaten of that plant, he sprang into the sea and was admitted into the circle of the gods, a story which emphasizes the connection between the old man of the sea and the plant of life at the same time that it betrays the influence on Greek myths of the Babylonian story of Adapa, the son of Ea, god of waters and wisdom.³

There is also Τρίτων, who lived in an undersea palace. His chief attribute was a sea-shell which he used as a horn (cf. Mimi's horn) and which gave him command of the winds, so that he could arouse or calm the sea at will. While Mimi drinks mead

³ Adapa, as a fisherman, was found on the sea-shore and brought into the house of gods. There he was offered the food of life, that was to make him immortal, but he declined to eat it.

in his horn and Trita prepares the soma, Τρίτων is fond of wine and in his drunkenness is brought into a trap set by the people of Tanagra. Asleep on the shore, he was decapitated with an axe, so that the statue of Triton in Tanagra was headless. This story most probably is a survival of the myth of Mimi's head.

The radical *trito-* in Triton's name is found in the name of other gods, Ἀμφιτρίτη, Τριτώνη, Τριτωνίς, Τριτογένεια Ἀθηνᾶ, etc.

Among those deities, Ἀμφιτρίτη, the well-known goddess, has a name which may be compared with those of other water-gods, e. g. Ἀμφίβαιος, 'surrounding the earth,' an epithet of Poseidon, Ἀμφίμαρος, a son of the latter god, whose name probably means 'living about the sea,' containing the root of Latin *mare*, Russ. *more*, etc. (Walde, *Etymolog. Wörterb. der lat. Sprache*, p. 465).

The element *trito-*, which therefore in Ἀμφιτρίτη seems in some manner to denote the sea, also appears to refer to water in the name of Τριτώνη or Τριτωνίς, 'Triton's wife,' one of the epithets of Τριτογένεια Ἀθηνᾶ. Athene, one of the main Greek goddesses, has broadened her domain by absorbing many local cults of female divinities and has become an almost supermythical deity. She is the ἀρχηγέτης, the wise founder and protector of cities *par excellence*, a female counterpart of *paradhāta* Thrīta. The same conception is also found in the Teutonic goddess Saga, who is decidedly a water-spirit living in Fensalir, the submarine palace of which we have already heard so much (Herrmann, *op. cit.* p. 316). Between Athene and these deities there is, of course, only a general resemblance due to the association of water with wisdom in the minds of the ancient people. This association is quite clear in the mythical aspect of Athene. The story of her birth, as is well known, is a thinly disguised storm-myth with the normal features of such myths, as the swallowing of a bright goddess (Μῆτις, pregnant of Athene), the flash of the thunderbolt (the sudden birth of Athene with the lance and the αἰγίς), or the loud voice of the thunder (Zeus utters a war-cry when he sees his brilliant daughter); and like all the Aryan storm-myths it takes place in a mythical sea (e. g. the Hara Bərəzaiti and the sea *Vourukaša* of the Iranians) which in the Greek version is the Triton-river.

The geographers cannot determine with precision the location of this river. Like all mythical names, it is found in many places

in the Greek world, although tradition places the scene in the remote west, the far-away watery recess from which, according to the old conception of the Greeks, storms rush upon the earth (Roscher, *Gorgonen*, p. 30). Mētis, the mother of Athene in the classical form of the myth, is an abstraction. She is the daughter of 'Ωκεανός, and the chances are that originally Athene, like Τρίτων, was directly born from 'Ωκεανός, so that Τρίτων and Τριτώνη constituted a pair of crafty and wise children of the wise water-god.

V

The question now arises whether there can be any relationship between the names of the Greek sea-gods and those of the Indo-Iranian water-deities, Trita and Traitana.

The element *trīto-* is still uninterpreted (Gruppe, *Griech. Myth.* p. 1143, note). The suggestion that it is related to Gr. *τρίζω* (Roscher, *Lex.* 1. 1. 318) is not serious, for this word means 'to scream, to cry,' and is properly used of young animals, although it is later extended to various shrill noises. The root is *τριγ-*, not *τρι-*, as is shown by the perfect *τέτριγα*.

On account of the long *i* it is scarcely possible to connect *trīto-* with *τριτός*, 'third.' The only conceivable relation would be with the root of Latin *tero*, *trīvī*, *tritum*. The meaning of 'rubbing, treading, grinding so as to make smooth or soft' does not seem, at first sight, to suit the derivatives of *trīto-*, but in Mid. Irish there is a word *triath* meaning 'soft, weak' (cf. *τέρυς* 'weak'), apparently akin to the stem of *tritum*, and a homonym *triath*, gen. *trethan*, 'sea,' which may be a different word, though very probably related to the former. The link between those two meanings is suggested by Arm. *threm*, 'to knead dough.'

The Latin verb *tero* was used of the earth and of the corn. A plough horse was a *trio*, while corn was *triticum*, 'the threshed, ground one' (Walde, *op. cit.* p. 793). The meaning 'soft, weak' is, moreover, present in many other derivatives of the root, as Sab. *terenum*, 'soft,' Skr. *taruṇa*, 'young,' Gr. *τέρεμνα*, 'vegetables easy to cook,' *τέρην*, 'tender,' *ἀτέραμνος*, 'hard,' etc.

In the name of the Indian water-god Trita, the *i* is short, which disagrees with the long *i* of *τρίτων*, etc. The shortening of the *i*, however, could easily be explained as a contamination with Indo-European *trīto-*, 'third' (cf. Gr. *τριτός*); and that such an inter-

pretation of the name took place among both Iranians and Indians is proved by various circumstances.⁴

It cannot be a mere coincidence that Thrīta in Iran is represented as the third sacrificer (Ys. 9. 10), while in Yt. 5. 72 Thrīta is also the third among three brothers.

In India, in a hymn of the Rig Veda (8. 47. 16), Trita as 'third' is mentioned with Dvita, 'second.' Sāyaṇa (on RV. 1. 105. 8) quotes a story of three brothers born from the waters, Ekata, Dvita, and Trita. The two former cast the latter into a well, as was stated above. The names of Ekata and Dvita do not appear outside these passages; nothing is known of these personalities, and it is more than likely that the names were invented to account for that of Trita, understood as 'third.' All this shows that in the minds of the people, both in India and in Iran, Trita meant 'Third,' but the part played by folk-etymology is so great in languages and mythologies that we have no serious reason to believe that this was the original meaning of the name.

Nothing in the essential and ancient features of Trita's personality can account for his being called 'the Third.' It is, therefore, no unreasonable hypothesis that the name was originally *Trita*, akin to *Τρίτων*, etc., but that the *ī* was shortened because of a folk-etymology which identified Trita with **trita*, 'third.'

As a conclusion, the probabilities are that the original meaning of Trita's name was 'soft, humid.' Such a slightly ironical appellative for the Old Man of the Waters was not irrelevant. It was perfectly consistent with the epithet *Āptya* applied to Trita in India and with the essential features of his character, which, as aforesaid, all point to his connection with water. The comparison with Gr. *Τρίτων*, *Τριτώνη*, etc., makes it even likely that the name as well as the personality of the wizard of the

⁴ The identification of Trita with *τρίτων* had been proposed in 1896 by J. Escher (*Triton und seine Bekämpfung durch Heracles*). As is often the case the value of the thesis was impaired by the feebleness of the argument, so that Kretschmer (*Wochenschr. f. klass. Phil.* 8. 339) easily demonstrated the weakness of the construction. His only objections, however, were that (1) Trita is not a water-god; and (2) the *i* is long in *τρίτων*. The present study, though it does not absolutely decide the matter, will show the weakness of those objections.

waters goes back to Indo-European times. The value of this etymology, however, may be doubted without impairing the conclusion that Trita is the Indian representative of an Indo-European conception.

VI

The fact that the great healers of Iran (Thrita and Airyaman), the wise experts in spells and remedies, originally were water-gods is by no means surprising.

The connection between water and wisdom has been found to be an essential element—a basic feature—of the mythologies and beliefs of both Teutons and Greeks. It is germane to state that—leaving aside the question of actual influences—the conceptions of the Babylonians offer in this respect a remarkable parallel to those of the Indo-Europeans. Like the Greeks, the Babylonians believed in an ocean (*apsū*) which was both the earthly sea and the Deep—heavenly or subterranean—surrounding the Earth. This abyss of water is also called Zu-Ab, ‘House of Wisdom’ (Jeremias, *op. cit.* p. 29). The god of these regions—Ea, ‘god of water,’ or Enki, ‘Lord of the Deep’ (Jeremias, *loc. cit.*)—is regarded as the source of all wisdom, as the counsellor of gods, kings, and men. He is the bringer of civilization. Berosus tells us that a mysterious being (Oannes = Ea), half-man, half-fish, passing the nights in the Persian Gulf, would come out of the water during the day to give instruction to the people (Roscher, *op. cit.* 3. 577 ff.). Ea is the god of mankind. He saved men from the deluge and placated the anger of Bel (Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 279) in the same way as Thraētaona saved mankind from the fury of Azhi Dahāka, who wished to make the seven parts of the world empty of men (Yt. 15. 19).

But the benevolence and good office of the water-god was especially observable in his activities as a healer. Ea cured all diseases, repelled all evil influences. He was the great magician of the world, knowing all fates. Just as Trita and Mimi were the counsellors, while Thraētaona and Wōdan were the killers of fiends, so Ea, the father of wisdom, was only the inspirer, while Bel, ‘the practical activity emanating from Wisdom’ (Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 62), was the god who slew Tiāmat, the monster of chaos.

To come back to Aryan beliefs, the connection between water

and healing (also present in Ea) is no less marked than the association of Water with Wisdom.

Āpas, 'the waters,' are lauded in various hymns of the Rig Veda as purifying (RV. 10. 17. 10) and remedial (ib. 6. 50. 7).

They bestow remedies and long life (ib. 1. 23. 19; 10. 9. 5). They watch over man's health in the house (HGS. 2. 4. 5; Macdonnell, *op. cit.* p. 85). They bestow excellent strength and immortality (RV. 10. 9. 5).

The river-goddess Sarasvatī, 'the divine' (*asuryā*; cf. Av. *ahurāni*, 'the goddess of water'), is the bestower of vitality, wealth, and pregnancy (RV. 10. 30. 12; 2. 41. 17; 7. 95. 2).

Rudra, the storm-god who makes streams flow upon earth, likewise has beneficent and healing powers (Macdonnell, *op. cit.* p. 17); and he grants all possible remedies (RV. 2. 33. 12; 5. 42. 11; 7. 46. 3; 1. 114. 5; 2. 33. 7).

In Iran, waters are also said to be healing (Yt. 8. 47), while Arədvī Sūra Anāhita, the great water-goddess, is healing, comforting, unifying, fructifying, etc. (Ys. 65. 1; Yt. 5. 1, etc). Vd. 21. 3 tells us that when it rains hard, the water is comforted, the earth is comforted, the plants are comforted, and so are the remedies and all the means of healing.

The fact that association between purifying waters and healing plants is found everywhere in Iran is explained in Bundahīš by the legend that Tištrya, the god of rain, sent down upon the earth water that had been mixed with the seeds of plants, and thus produced the thousand plants that keep away ten thousand diseases created by the Evil Spirit.

Plants, like waters, are called *baēšazya*, 'healing' (Vd. 20. 4), and the union between water and plants is symbolized by the pair of abstract deities Haurvatāt and Amərətātāt ('Health' and 'Immortality'). Those entities belong to the circle of personified abstractions surrounding Ahura Mazdāh. In the preachings of Zoroaster, the words have their moral, philosophical meaning. They are used constantly together to denote the happiness of the blest: 'Give, O Amərətātāt and Haurvatāt, your lasting blessing' (Ys. 33. 8); the following sentences make it clear that the blessing of Haurvatāt and Amərətātāt refers to the delights of life 'that were, that are now, and that ever shall be' (ib. v. 10); and this boon is to be imparted by Vahišta Manah

(ib. v. 9), 'the Best Spirit,' whose name survives in Pers. *Bahisht* as a name of paradise.

But if those conceptions are wholly spiritual for the enlightened disciple of Zoroaster, they have a popular meaning as well. As early as Yt. 2. 3 Amərətātāt is associated with Gaokərəna (the tree of life) and with fertility, while in later Zoroastrianism, it is merely the religious name of plants. As to Haurvatāt, she is the deity of daily bread, the personification of abundance which in those countries is closely dependent upon rain, so that as early as Ys. 3. 1 and 8. 1, Haurvatāt denotes the waters.

In conclusion, therefore, the Iranians locate the vitalizing, healing power of nature in plants in general and especially in the tree Gaokərəna; but this tree grows in the sea Vourukaša, and water and plants are constantly associated. The germs of all vegetables were contained in the primeval rain of Tištrya, and the dual expression 'water and plants,' or its more abstract equivalent, 'Health and Immortality,' is the symbol of the completion of life and happiness. Similar ideas have been shown to prevail among Indians who magnify the healing power of waters. It is not surprising, therefore, that the gods of waters, the gods of rain, and the gods of storm are also the healing deities.

Since in most cases, especially in that of Thrīta and Thraētaona, as well as in that of Rudra and Sarasvatī, there can be no reasonable doubt that the watery character of the deities is the oldest and primary one, their attributes as healers as well as their wisdom—and, in general, their beneficent, vitalizing, fertilizing power—should be regarded as a secondary development.

In this lies the interest of Trīta's story and of this article about the healing gods of Iran. It would not be reasonable to draw from this monograph conclusions of too general a character. Let it be observed, however, that it brings forward facts which are not in favor of the tendency, so prevalent in our days, to reduce most of the healing or fertilizing deities to anthropomorphized tribal spirits of fertility or deified medicine-men.